DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 442 913 UD 033 655

AUTHOR	Schwartz, Wendy, Ed.
TITLE	New Trends in Language Education for Hispanic Students. ERIC/CUE Digest Number 155.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, New York, NY.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-UD-00-4
ISSN	ISSN-0889-8049
PUB DATE	2000-07-00
NOTE	4p.
CONTRACT	ED-99-CO-0035
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Institute for Urban and Minority Education, Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027 (free). Tel: 800-601-4868 (Toll free).
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Bilingual Education; Bilingual Students; Dropouts; *Educational Policy; Educational Practices; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; *Hispanic American Students; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

This digest summarizes the effective bilingual strategies described in a commissioned paper, "Transforming Education for Hispanic Youth: Exemplary Practices" by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood and Walter G. Secada, and the recommendations of the Hispanic Dropout Project (U.S. Department of Education) for transforming bilingual education at all school levels. Several educational policies are necessary to promote effective bilingual education practices. Native Spanish-speaking students need to continue in a bilingual program until they have a solid linguistic foundation that enables their mastery of other academic subjects as well as English and Spanish. Schools need to convey the expectation that students will become literate in English and learn to high standards. Bilingual education should be depoliticized, and the early tracking of limited English proficient students into low reading groups and other slow classes must be discontinued. Teacher training is essential to effective bilingual education programs. Some exemplary programs at high school, middle school, and elementary levels are identified, and the instructional strategies of these schools are discussed. Tutoring programs may provide valuable help for bilingual students, and two such programs are described. Components of effective bilingual programs are not all the same, but some universal principles emerge. Successful programs revise their approaches as new strategies are proven effective and new student needs are identified. Effective schools recognize the necessity of proficiency in both languages, and they offer individualized instruction and other aids. Successful schools also maintain an atmosphere that supports the belief that all students are equally valuable and that they all will succeed. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 442 913

New Trends in Language Education for Hispanic Students

Digest Number 155
EDO-UD-00-4

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
July 2000
ISSN 0889-8049

UD033655

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON URBAN EDUCATION

DIGEST

Number 155, July 2000 EDO-UD-00-4 ISSN 0889 8049

NEW TRENDS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS

The high dropout rate among Hispanic youth has many causes. One especially important factor is the failure of some public schools to provide a meaningful education that builds on students' native language and culture while also helping them develop good English language skills. To remain committed to schools, students need to believe that families of their ethnicity are welcome in school, that they will learn English sufficiently well to enable their full social and economic participation in life in the United States, and that earning a diploma will materially improve their future lives. Further, for families to become involved in their children's school and be supportive of their continued attendance, they need assurance that their children are getting a good education—and for many of them that means mastery of the English language.

In 1995 U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley initiated the Hispanic Dropout Project (HDP) to develop a set of specific policy and practice recommendations to improve the education and school retention of Hispanic students. HDP's activities included collection of information on the school experiences of Hispanic students, on the views about education and schools held by members of the various Hispanic communities, and on the results of relevant research studies. One commissioned paper, *Transforming Education for Hispanic Youth: Exemplary Practices, Programs, and Schools* (Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood and Walter G. Secada, published by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Washington, DC) reviewed case studies of replicable exemplary schools and programs, demonstrating that schools taking several different approaches can be equally effective.

This digest summarizes the effective bilingual strategies described in *Transforming Education* and HDP's recommendations for bilingual education at all school levels. While the strategies are specifically oriented to the needs of Hispanic students, most can improve the education of all students with immigrant and limited English speaking backgrounds.

Principles of Effective Bilingual Education Practices

Educational Policy

Native Spanish-speaking students need to continue in a bilingual program until they have a solid linguistic foundation that enables their mastery of other academic subjects as well as English and Spanish. Thus, learning a second language requires a long, consistent effort that schools must support. Also, and perhaps most important, schools need to convey the expectation that students will become literate in English and learn to high standards. To provide an effective education for Hispanic students who enter school speaking English, schools need to understand the ways that their distinct culture influences how they learn and to provide appropriate instruction. To promote the academic achievement of all students of Hispanic origin, schools should nurture their native cultures by incorporating information about them into the curriculum and celebrating them in school activities; curriculum that builds on students' native language and their real world knowledge in various subjects is most effective.

In order for schools to provide Hispanic students with a high quality education and prepare them for higher education, bilingual education needs to be depoliticized. That is, programs for Limited English Speaking (LEP) students should not be used either to segregate and marginalize the students or to diminish the quality of their education. Rather, bilingual programs should be intellectually stimulating, and designed for integration with mainstream education; they should prepare participants for greater learning challenges, in English as well as Spanish.

Early tracking of LEP students into low-reading groups and other slow classes—an unfortunately common practice—establishes a pattern of limited learning. Such classes expose young children to fewer words, provide less time for classroom reading, and suffer more frequent disruptions from students than do other classes. Not only does such placement compromise students' ability to learn English but it suggests to them that they are to blame for their failure, which further exacerbates their difficulties in achieving.

Teacher Training and Performance

Knowledgeable and sensitive teachers are essential to effective bilingual programs. Thus, teachers should be kept up-to-date about state-of-the-art strategies for language instruction specifically, and for instruction generally, that accounts for students' varying levels of English proficiency. Teachers may need to be helped to appreciate that Hispanic students can succeed in school, can go on to higher education, and can have a good career, and that teachers' acceptance of these beliefs will significantly affect their teaching efficacy. Further, teachers' understanding of students' cultural heritage improves both their teaching ability and their maintenance of home-school linkages. Teachers' communication of trust and confidence, and development of a mutually respectful relationship with students, bolsters children's self-esteem and fosters a connection to school that helps inoculate them against an impulse to drop out.

Experience shows that specifically recruiting teachers and administrative staff who speak Spanish and are familiar with Hispanic culture increases achievement in schools with a large Hispanic student body. Thus, Lennox Middle School (Lennox, CA), whose student population is overwhelmingly Hispanic, and which has high student achievement and a low dropout rate, requires that its staff be bilingual. Further, the school monitors teachers regularly to ensure that they are sensitive to students' culture and show respect for the students by patiently supporting their efforts to learn. The Calexico School District, near the California-Mexico border, has similar hiring practices, but, in addition, seeks teachers with a commitment to collaboration so they will support the district's team-teaching orientation. Calexico believes that team teaching promotes a collective sense of responsibility and an ethos that problems are to be shared, not passed off to someone else for solving, as well as more effective student learning.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bilingual Education in the Classroom

Programs

The successful bilingual programs identified by HDP combine rigorous English language instruction with classroom instruction in Spanish, and use of the Spanish language, as needed, to ensure learning in all subjects. Most classes consist of a mix of students with widely varying English language proficiency.

High School. The educational programs of the Calexico School District have won awards. Its bilingual program, *El Cid*, which was created first for its high school and later retooled for elementary school use as well, promotes proficiency in both English and Spanish. The program is research-based and continually refined to reflect new knowledge about effective bilingual practices, identified from research conducted by experts in the field and from the district's own experience. In addition to the usual ESL orientation, *El Cid* has a Spanish as a Second Language component for students who have lost their proficiency in Spanish. Classes are comprised of both native English speakers and students whose primary language is Spanish. Teachers team-teach: one is the model for correct use of the English language; the other is the model for use of the Spanish language.

At the high school level, Calexico students participate in a strong English Language Development program while they are receiving instruction in other college-preparatory subjects in their native language or in sheltered English, where content is presented to LEP students by teachers using a limited English vocabulary, visuals, non-verbal cues, and other extra-lingual instructional techniques. These students are therefore able to keep up academically with their English-fluent classmates, and are expected to pass an English language proficiency test in order to graduate from high school. Late-arriving immigrants often continue their English education at the local community college.

Middle School. The Lennox Middle School, which has a strong bilingual program, organizes its students into learning teams, uses cooperative learning strategies, and encourages "instructional conversation" (a teaching technique consisting of verbal interaction between teachers and students) as a way of solving problems and sharing knowledge and ideas. Each team is comprised of students with varying levels of English proficiency to maximize communication and promote both formal and informal language learning.

Elementary School. Some schools at the elementary level use existing reform models to both improve education delivery overall and to teach English to LEP students. For example, Success for All, a comprehensive schoolwide reform effort, has a beginning reading curriculum for schools with Spanish/English bilingual programs, *Lee Conmigo*, which uses curriculum materials and sequencing appropriate to Hispanic culture and the Spanish language. Lackland City Elementary School (San Antonio, TX), a Success for All school, also provides ESL and GED classes for parents, to encourage family involvement.

Instructional Strategies

Teachers in the Calexico School District high schools who teach classes in English sometimes switch into Spanish to ensure the comprehension of native Spanish speaking students. Because LEP students continue to be intimidated by advanced classes in mathematics, despite active encouragement from advisors, Calexico teachers emphasize that math has its own vocabulary, the mastery of which is not determined by students' prior language knowledge. Teachers often use instructional strategies that do not require language to teach a lesson effectively or convey information.

Language switching can also be effective at the elementary level. For example, Jefferson Elementary School (Lennox, CA), which uses Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), an early elementary mathematics program, encourages students to work in bilingual groups and to communicate with each other and convey their method of problem solving by using the language they feel most comfortable with. Teachers and students also use a great many visuals to promote comprehension by LEP students. The school's overall goal, however, is not only proficiency in math but in English language development and use.

Lennox Middle School, conversely, does not permit language switching in teaching, although its bilingual staff uses both English and Spanish informally to communicate with students. While the school emphasizes the English language in the classroom, literature classes feature Latino/a writers to demonstrate Hispanic accomplishment and pique students' interest.

Tutoring

The HOSTS (Helping One Student to Succeed) remedial basic skills tutoring program, used by elementary schools nationwide, has a bilingual language arts component that can be used by schools with different language acquisition philosophies. For example, the Sparks Elementary School (Pasadena, TX) matches students monolingual in Spanish with bilingual mentors to provide initial instruction in students' primary language. However, the Saucedo Academy (Chicago, IL), which uses English for classroom interactions outside its bilingual program because many students hear English only at school, uses HOSTS mentors whose tutoring is provided in English.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, a national mentoring program, also allows for use of both English and Spanish in tutoring sessions. The Cesar E. Chávez Middle School (La Joya, TX), for example, accepts both Spanish and English speakers as tutors and students, with the result that all participants improve their skills in the two languages.

Conclusion

While the components of effective bilingual programs may differ, or even contradict each other, some universal principles emerge in the quest to reach the overall goal of student mastery of the English language. First, schools continually revise their approaches as new strategies are proven effective and new student needs are identified. Second, they embrace the philosophy that true bilingualism means proficiency in both Spanish and English and they represent Hispanic culture in the curriculum. Third, they offer individualized instruction and other aids to ensure that students learn English and other subjects that will enable future career fulfillment. And, finally, schools, with the full participation of their teachers and staff, maintain an atmosphere that supports the beliefs that all students are equally valuable and bring to the school equally valuable cultures, and the expectation that all will succeed.

This Digest was developed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. ED-99-CO-0035. The opinions in this Digest do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Institute for Urban and Minority Education, Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, (800) 601-4868. Erwin Flaxman, Director. Wendy Schwartz, Managing Editor.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE